

HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 2 January 2005

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League that provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

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IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY ARIVE_ALIVE CAMPAIGN THE TSUNAMI DISASTER

FIRST SPECIAL REQUEST FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SARL

I have had a request from Graham Hartlett, President of the SARL, to ask all ZR and ZU license holders to please be patient regarding the issuing of the Government Gazette allowing them access to various HF bands.

The latest is that the publication has in fact been printed but not collated due to it being a holiday period and the department working only with a skeleton staff.

Please do not set your license at risk for suspension or cancellation due to this delay. It is not worth it. Please be patient for just a few more days and please do not phone the Government Printers office again as they are becoming frustrated trying to handle calls which they know nothing about.

For more information, please access the Government website at www.polity.org.za and search for publications of the Government Gazette or related information.

However, Graham and I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.070MHz. KZN also have a Wednesday evening call-up and meeting on their 2M repeater system.

The National Bulletin at 17H00 CAT on 7,070MHz in the 40M band with a relay on 145,700MHz in the greater Johannesburg area.

The Gauteng North bulletin will follow immediately after the National Bulletin on 145,725MHz in the Pretoria area on Sundays.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Hamnet Western Cape Province meets on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is sent to all those of whom I have an e-mail address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

Please note, this bulletin is available for download from the web site of the SARL under the heading "HAMNET".

ARIVE_ALIVE CAMPAIGN

The summer holiday period is still very much with us. Many vehicles will be returning to Gauteng today and over the next few weeks.

Schools reopen 12 January inland and 19 January coastal. The weekends of the 8/9 January and the following weekend of 15/16 January will probably see the last of the stragglers homeward bound.

It will be appreciated if we could monitor 7,070 MHz in the 40M band as well as local repeaters around the country.

My thanks to all of you who are still monitoring where possible.

Not to be allowed to relax too much, the next thing to think of is the Easter weekend which this years falls over the weekend of 25/28 March. However, I have noted that most schools will also be closed over that period.

More about Easter at the beginning of March.

THE TSUNAMI DISASTER

I do not think that anybody in their wildest dreams would ever have considered being part of such a major international disaster. The immense magnitude of this disaster is beyond comprehension and the damage caused will take years to repair. It is turning into the world s worst natural disaster.

The loss of life, I predict could eventually exceed the 150,000 mark and so sad to see that so far at least 4 South Africans are among the dead, with many more still missing. My wife, Estelle, spoke to one of the doctors who attends our Church and who was on the Netcare 911 mercy flight. His vivid description of the unbelievable sight which met them in Phuket, was something he will never forget. Total destruction!

One satellite jpg picture e-mailed to me vividly shows the large wall of water seconds before it hit and annihilated the eastern shores of Sri Lanka. You cannot imagine a wave that large. This morning s "Sunday Times" is full of graphic illustrations of this tradgedy.

Hamnet was activated to assist with alternative communication to the mercy flight that took paramedics to Phuket, and returned the same day with survivors. Although we were not involved in any communication, I doubt if anything would have been possible as the H.F. bands are pretty dead at present due to propagation problems.

Hamnet sent off two e-mails to Indonesia and Sri Lanka s Hamnet counterparts, but as yet no reply has been received. However, we did offer standby facilities should they need to make use of alternative means of communication propa-

gation allowing. I also made direct contact with YBØZ, the official emergency radio station on Sumatra, one of the worst hit areas.

However, from all the data being sent to me and from what I have downloaded from various web sites, amateur radio operators, mainly from India are establishing a vast network across the area to help and assist in passing emergency messages.

Their main concern being the Islands of Andaman and Nicobar. Port Blair on the Andaman Island was without power for a long time and many satellite phones were flown in to assist with communication. As luck would have it, for the first time in 25 years, a DX_pedition was allowed to operate from the Island. As operators were busy working pile-ups, the tremor shook the island and after the tsunami, all electrical power was lost.

The amateurs out there waited with bated breath, according to one of the many printouts sent to me during the last few days, to find out if the guys had survived the tidal wave. After two hours and scavenging batteries here and there, the amateur fraternity were pleased to hear they were not only safe, but that their dx_pedition station had now become an emergency communications centre for the whole Island. Radio amateurs being in the right place at the right time.

But, the affected area is so vast, that it becomes almost impossible to concentrate on one specific area only. Affected countries include India, Sri Lanka, Sumatra, Indonesia, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Bangladesh, The Maldives, West Bengal, Thailand, Somalia, Kenya, Seychelles, and many many more.

We have been touch with a few International Organisations like The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) plus a few other Emergency Communication Organisations offering them our services.

We are also in the process of establishing an International Internet E-Mail Network to coordinate messages and related data that needs to be communicated internationally. This could take a while as it is only now that serious relief efforts are beginning to fall into place and being established. A network may already have been established but we will search the Internet over the next few days to link in with what may have been established.

I already have quite a file of data and information on this event so watch this space. We will keep you informed, however, be aware that we may never get involved like many other countries to the north of us simply because we are very far removed from East Asia.

One final request, in the true spirit of Amateur Radio, please do not interfere on frequencies where emergency traffic is being transmitted unless the operator asks for assistance. The most frequently used frequencies appear to be 14:190, 14:195, 14:200, 21:295 and also 7:050 and 7:060 in the 40M band which we can occasionally hear especially late afternoon and evening.

That is all for the moment.

Bulletin ends.